

South Africa's Most Notorious Criminals in History.

Do you still remember the Gert van Rooyen stories in the South African headlines as a child? Well, I was still a very young in the 80's (early 90's) and this story has captured my attention ever since. Wondering what happened to the missing children, were they still alive? Will they ever be found? As a tribute to all missing children (not only to those in this tale) we decided to dedicate this article to them all.

Gert van Rooyen:

Cornelius Gerhardus van Rooyen (1938 – January 15, 1990), better known as Gert van Rooyen, was a South African pedophile and serial killer, who allegedly killed at least six young girls between 1988 and 1989. Van Rooyen and his female accomplice, Joey Haarhoff, are believed to be responsible for the abduction, sexual assault and murder of several missing girls, aged between nine and sixteen-years-old, across eastern South Africa in the late 1980's. In 1990, when faced with arrest after the escape of their latest kidnap victim, Van Rooyen killed Haarhoff before committing suicide. Despite later evidence against them, the two were never formally convicted due to their deaths, and the bodies of their supposed victims were never found.

Gert van Rooyen	
Born	Cornelius Gerhardus van Rooyen 1938 South Africa
Died	15 January 1990 (aged 51/52) Pretoria, South Africa
Cause of death	Suicide
Occupation	Builder
Details	
Country	South Africa
Killed	6

Biography



Cornelius Gerhardus van Rooyen was born in South Africa in 1938, and was commonly known as Gert or by his nickname "Bokkie". He is assumed to be the sole killer, although the South African Police Force have not conducted full and conclusive investigation since his suicide. It is commonly believed that he was part of a pedophile group, although this has not been fully investigated.

Various reports as to the whereabouts of his victims have not been followed up on, leaving their families unable to put them to rest.

Criminal history

Gert Van Rooyen's first crimes were various thefts. He was sent to a reform school in 1954, after stealing a car which he used as transport from Cape Town to Pretoria to visit his dying mother. In 1960, he was convicted of stealing motor

spares and clothing. Van Rooyen married and subsequently fathered six children: Anne Marie, Judith, Hannes, Flippie, Gerhard and Adriaan, and earned a legitimate living running a building construction business together with his brothers.

In 1979, van Rooyen abducted two girls, aged 10 and 13, taking them to the Hartbeespoort Dam near Pretoria, where he punched them in the face and ordered them to strip naked and perform sexual acts on him. Van Rooyen released the girls in Pretoria the following day, and was subsequently arrested and sentenced to four years imprisonment for abduction, sexual assault and common assault of the girls, serving three years before being released in 1982.

In August 1983, he and his wife Aletta divorced. In 1988, van Rooyen started dating divorcee Francina Johanna ("Joey") Hermina Haarhoff, and the couple holidayed together at Warmbaths and Umdloti, on the KwaZulu Natal coast. It is commonly believed that some of their victims may be buried on the beaches in KZN, as the time of the abductions corresponds to known vacation periods.

Possible victims



Joan Horn



Anne-Marie Wapenaar



Fiona Harvey



Odette Boucher



Tracy-Lee Scott-Crossley

Van Rooyen is thought to have used Haarhoff to lure young girls for him. Children's homes reported that she telephoned requesting to bring girls home for the holidays and weekends. The couple applied to foster children, but the application was turned down. At the end of 1989, a 14-year-old girl from an orphanage in the Orange Free State spent the Christmas holidays with the couple.

- On 1 August 1988, fourteen-year-old Tracy-Lee Scott-Crossley of Randburg near Johannesburg disappeared. She was seen by witnesses climbing into a Volkswagen Beetle outside of the shopping mall in Cresta. A nationwide police search and hypermarket poster campaign were launched.^[r3] Her brother Mark, who had declined an offer to go with her, was severely guilt-ridden and traumatised by her disappearance. In later life he was found guilty of the murder of a farm worker, beating him to death and throwing his unconscious body to the lions.
- On 22 December 1988, twelve-year-old Fiona Harvey of Pietermaritzburg disappeared. A white Ford Bantam pick-up truck used in her abduction with an advertisement for Van Rooyen's building-contracting business on it would later link him to this crime.
- On 7 June 1989, twelve-year-old Joan Horn of Pretoria disappeared.
- In July 1989, sixteen-year-old Janet Delpont of Durban disappeared after being abducted in a shopping mall by a blonde woman. She was later found wandering around distressed, but unharmed.
- Some weeks later, nine-year-old Rosa Piel of Alberton disappeared.
- On 22 September 1989, eleven-year-old Odette Boucher and twelve-year-old Anne-Mari Wapenaar both of Kempton Park disappeared.
- On 29 September 1989, Kobie Wapenaar, Anne-Mari's mother, received a letter from her daughter claiming that she and Odette had run away to Durban with some boys. Odette's letter arrived a week after Anne-Mari's — although it was posted on the same day, 23 September 1989, in Durban. It is suspected the letter was written under duress.
- On 3 November 1989, thirteen-year-old Yolanda Wessels, the niece of Van Rooyen's partner Joey Haarhoff, disappeared.
- On 11 January 1990, sixteen-year-old Joan Booysen of Pretoria was abducted by Haarhoff in Church Square, Pretoria, and was taken to van Rooyen's home on Malherbe Street, in the Capital Park neighborhood of the city.(25°43'43.5"S 28°11'24"E) Booysen was handcuffed, drugged and sexually assaulted before being locked in a cupboard. It is likely that Van Rooyen and Haarhoff thought that Booysen was younger than she was due to her small size. She managed to escape and alert the police who placed the home under surveillance, and four days later, identified Van Rooyen when he drove past his house in a white Ford pick-up that matched the description of a vehicle used in one of the abductions. Upon discovering Booysen's disappearance, Van Rooyen shot and killed Haarhoff with a .22 revolver before committing suicide with a .357 revolver.



All the above disappearances, with the exception of Rosa Piel, were linked by witness statements or forensic evidence to Van Rooyen and Haarhoff following their deaths. For example, Odette Boucher's home address and phone number which was found written on a piece of paper and hidden under a carpet in the garage, as well as her class captain's badge and yellow bag. Anne-Mari Wapenaar's address and home keys as well as the envelopes and paper that they used wrote to their parents were found in his home. None of the Van Rooyen's victims were ever found, despite extensive police searches of his business premises and house, which was dubbed "The House of Horrors" by the press.

In 1996, Absa Bank donated Van Rooyen's former house to the police to allow the girls' disappearance to be investigated further. On 13 May 1996, police systematically demolished the house in a search for new forensic evidence that might provide clues to the fate of the missing girls. The roof was removed and vacuumed for traces of human hair and nails, then the walls demolished and the kitchen and main bedroom scanned with sonar equipment for cavities. The soil in the garden was sifted and some bones found, but forensic pathologists identified these as non-human.

Timeline of Events

1979: Gert van Rooyen abducts two girls aged 10 and 13, takes them to Hartbeespoort Dam, strips them, forces them to perform lewd acts and punches them in the face when they resist. He dumps them in Pretoria West the next morning. He is later sentenced to four years' imprisonment for the abduction, sexual assault and assault of the girls.

September 1983: Van Rooyen and his wife Aletta divorce.

August 1 1988: Tracy-Lee Scott-Crossley (14) of Randburg disappears. She is later reported as having been seen climbing into a VW Beetle outside the Cresta shopping mall.

December 22 1988: Fiona Harvey (12), of Pietermaritzburg, disappears. It is later found that the white Ford Bantam bakkie used in her abduction had the same sign painted on it as Van Rooyen's building-contracting business.

June 7 1989: Joan Horn (12), of Pretoria, disappears.

July 1989: Janet Delport (16), of Durban, disappears after being abducted in a mall by a blonde woman. Later found wandering around, distressed but unharmed. Weeks later, Rosa Piel (9), of Alberton, disappears. Van Rooyen is suspected but there is no evidence.

September 22 1989: Odette Boucher (11), of Kempton Park, disappears. That same day, Anne-Mari Wapenaar (12), of Kempton Park, goes missing. Odette's home address, phone number and her class captain's badge as well as Anne-Mari's address and a key to her home are later found at Van Rooyen's home.

September 29 1989: Kobie Wapenaar, Anne-Mari's mother, receives a letter from her daughter claiming that she and Odette had voluntarily run away to Durban with a pair of boys. It is suspected the letter was written under duress.

November 3 1989: Yolanda Wessels (13), of Kempton Park, disappears. Haarhoff is her aunt.

January 11 1990: Joan Booyesen (16), of Pretoria, is abducted by Haarhoff from Church Square. Joan is taken to Van Rooyen's home, where she is handcuffed, drugged, indecently assaulted and locked up. She manages to escape and the police are notified.

January 15 1990: Police staking out Van Rooyen's home give chase to a suspicious-looking white Ford Bantam bakkie that drives past the house. Pulling the bakkie over to the side of the road, Van Rooyen shoots Haarhoff, then himself. Both die at the scene.

January 25 1990: A pedestrian spots a girl who looks like Tracy-Lee in the company of a young man near the Chelsea Hotel in Berea, Johannesburg. This is but one of a deluge of "sightings" of the missing girls. Investigators doubt its authenticity.

May 7 1990: South African businessman Johan Blanche claims to have met three girls answering to the descriptions of Anne-Mari, Odette and Fiona at a fairground in Lusaka, Zambia. The girls claim to be Swedish but have South African accents.

November 1997: Flippie van Rooyen (36) tells a Pretoria court his father had dumped children's bodies in acid after they were sacrificed in a satanic ritual. He claimed three apartheid cabinet ministers who met with his father in 1989 were involved in a paedophile ring. He claimed Joan Horn was murdered shortly after she was kidnapped. This week: Several sets of juvenile human bones are uncovered by storm damage from their sandy grave about 500m away from an Umdloti, North Coast, holiday resort believed to have been used by Van Rooyen and Haarhoff.

In February 2001, Flippie van Rooyen, Gert van Rooyen's son, was found guilty of perjury in the Pretoria Magistrate's Court. He was charged with three counts of perjury after giving police conflicting statements under oath relating to the six missing schoolgirls. Flippie was then already in jail for a death sentence which had been commuted to life imprisonment, for the murder of a 15-year-old Zimbabwean girl. He was paroled in 2008. Another son, Gerhard, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for theft and fraud.

On 12 March 2007, renewed interest in the case occurred after a set of adolescent bones was found on the beach near Umdloti, KwaZulu-Natal about 500m away from a holiday resort that Van Rooyen and Haarhoff are known to have visited. Subsequent DNA testing did not identify any of the Van Rooyen victims. The South African Police have not released further details, which would lead one to believe there was no positive identification made.

In November 2007, bones were discovered in a property adjacent to Van Rooyen's house in Pretoria whilst ground was being dug up to install a swimming pool. Local authorities were alerted and police forensic experts were to determine if the bones were human.

Conclusion

These missing children's story is just one of many unsolved cases world-wide. If they will ever be found (dead or alive) is a matter that is still to be resolved. We kindly ask that if there is anyone with information about any abducted children that has not come forward, PLEASE DO SO !!

HET U ENIGE VAN HIERDIE VERMISTE KINDERS GESIEN? HAVE YOU SEEN ANY OF THESE MISSING CHILDREN?



TRACY-LEE SCOTT CROSSLEY



FIONA HARVEY



JOAN HORN

KONTAK ASSEBLIEF ENIGEEN VAN HIERDIE S.A. POLISIE SPEURDERS — PLEASE CONTACT ANY OF THESE S.A. POLICE DETECTIVES:
Kantoorure/Office hours: (011) 845-2820 of/or (011) 845-2878. Na ure/After hours: Rudie van Olst (011) 744-3412; Nic Joubert (011) 976-3847;
Frik Roodt (011) 972-8878; Carel Cornelius (012) 386-0256; Johan Lochner (011) 793-2006
** ELKE OPROEP SAL OPGEVOLG WORD *** EVERY CALL WILL BE FOLLOWED UP **



ANNE-MARIE WAPENAAR



ODETTE BOUCHER



YOLANDE WESSELS

BELONING — R15 000 — REWARD